THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE;

OR

Weekly Intelligence

IN THE CIVIL, NATURAL, MORAL, LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS WORLDS.

CALCULATED PARTICULARLY FOR THE PERUSAL OF THE YOUNG, AND THOSE OF RETIRED HABITS OF LIFE.

PUBLISHED INDEPENDENTLY OF ANY INTERESTED PARTY ATTACHMENT, AND WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES OF TRUTH AND PURITY.

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FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

ESSAYS, *Moral, Religious, Literary and Philosophical.*

NO. XLII. *April* 2, 1805.

LIGHT.

"Let there be Light!" proclaim'd th' Almighty Lord—
'Astonish'd CHAOS heard the potent word;—'
DARWIN.

"——AND THERE WAS LIGHT!" GENESIS.

The morning dawns! the shadows of the evening retire; the crimsoned east, harbinger of good, proclaims the approach of the sun—the source of material light; and those objects which two hours past were scarcely discernible, and had no apparent hue, now gradually become illuminated, and present their proper *colours* to the eye.

The colours of different bodies are not inherent in them, but depend on the properties which the latter possess of reflecting certain rays more copiously than others; and hence they appear of that colour whose rays have been reflected in the greatest quantity.

It is very probable, that the particles of light only affect the eye by their *rapid succession*; for if the windows of a room were so constructed as to be instantly closed at will, when the sun directs his rays immediately into it, and it be thus entirely illuminated, at the moment the windows close, and no more light is admitted, although the room at that instant be full of these rays or particles, the latter become so instantaneously absorbed by the surrounding bodies, that no reflections from them to the retina are produced; or if any exist, they are so feeble that the eye has not power to accommodate itself to their entrance or perception. For the same reason, I believe the complete circle of fire, made by rapidly twirling a stick whose end is ignited, is visible, from the *quick succession* of the particles of light.

Light is mostly accompanied with heat, and heat with light; yet there is great reason to believe that they are distinct fluids, not only from the different times which are required for each to pass through bodies of the same density, but from many other considerations. The present uncertain state of Science, however, will not permit us to pronounce decisively whether they be different fluids, or that one be only a modification of the other.

Plants will always prefer light to heat; as is evidenced by the inclination of their leaves and stems towards the former.—Those of tropical climates, as they are more exposed to light, possess generally more odorous properties; their aromatic oils are secreted in greater abundance and strength, their resinous matter is purer, and their taste more pungent. And no one, perhaps, is ignorant of the deep colour fruits have on that side which has been acted on by intense light.

Its influence on the animal creation is manifested by those animals which are excluded from it: their brilliant colours are gradually lost, and they become of a whitish hue.

The texture of bodies is also changed by exposition to light, as well as their colour, exclusively of *heat* or *air*. And it is rational to believe, on viewing the facts disclosed to us by Chemical Science, that Light is the grand agent made use of by the Deity, by which *pure* is evolved from some kinds of *impure* air, and the atmosphere which we breathe, and which is essential to our existence, is fitted for the purposes of sustaining and preserving Animal, as well as Vegetative Life!

THESE, and numerous other properties of this wonderful fluid are familiar to the Natural Philosopher. Divesting them as much as possible of technical phrases, I have "*currente calamo*" collected these few general qualities. By an attention to them, though desultorily brought to our view, we shall learn many useful deductions, and important considerations,—and to look around us with more regard—to see the various blessings of Divine Providence which encircle us, and which cannot be sufficiently valued.

Such is *one* of the numberless favours of an Allwise and Benevolent Being! invaluable indeed! Let us therefore turn our inquisitive eyes around, and contemplate the benefits produced by this inestimable and miraculous agent. The prospect will cause the grateful tongue to exclaim "Truly the light is *sweet*; and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun *;" and the philosopher to join with him who, excluded from the view of that luminary, deplored the loss of his vision,—

"Hail! holy LIGHT! offspring of heav'n, first-born!
"* * * * * * * * Pure etherial stream,
"Thy fountain who shall tell? Before the sun,
"Before the heav'ns *thou* wert, and at the voice
"Of God, as with a mantle didst invest
"The rising world of waters dark and deep,
"Won from the void and formless infinite."

BUT—shall the *created substance* attract our regard, and the praises of the CREATOR be neglected? Shall the Persian celebrate in grateful hymns the bounties of *his* God, and the Christian refrain from adoring that Divine Source, whose beams irradiate his prospects—whose light is rapture, and whose glory blazes through ten thousand worlds?—Shall man, formed the only rational being, in respect to his conduct be the most irrational? Shall he, for whom creation seems to smile, refuse to attune his heart to the choral swell of praise? "Shall *Pagan* pages," says the pious and animated Dr. Young—

"Shall *Pagan* pages glow celestial flame,
"And *Christian* languish? On our hearts, not heads,
"Falls the FOUL INFAMY! ——————."

* Eccles. xi. 7.

That divine, *increated* light, however, is as incomprehensible in its essence to the Christian, as the nature of the material sun is to the man. Unillumined by it, the mind gropes in a tenfold darkness; but when its rays beam on the soul, all is novelty, and all is peace! It then perceives *snares* where it formerly imagined there were only innocent pleasures, and *destruction*, where safety and happiness appeared to hold their abode. Like images in a telescope, the distant objects of Eternity are presented nearer to the view, and those truths, before seen as "through a glass, darkly," are illumined with new splendour; while the captivations of this world, and all its flattering allurements are observed to recede from the sight, and appear in a different form and magnitude, as near objects are seen through the *inverted* tube.

Pause, therefore, Mortal! hear, and ponder with attention on *these important truths*.—God is LIGHT; His Holy Spirit is the *divine principle of eternal light;* our blessed Saviour by his coming into the world, and suffering an agonizing death for the sins of mankind, *brought life and immortality to light*. The cherubim and the seraphim, and all the Angelic Host, with the spirits of the just made perfect, dwell forever in the radiant worlds of LIGHT: for the Everlasting Jehovah is the light of that heavenly city, whither our ardent wishes aspire!

May those, therefore, who prefer light to darkness, and the splendour of noonday to the obscurity of midnight, seek—*daily seek* to be illumined by that IMMORTAL SUN, whose irradiations shall cheer and support the soul, and enable it to see, unmoved, the awful and mighty dissolution of myriads of worlds; and resting on the rock of Faith, to hear without dread, the harsh groans of an expiring creation: and finally to become one of the children of light, and a joyful heir of eternal day!

ORMOND.

THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

"Minds elevate, and panting for *unseen*,
And defecate from *sense*, alone obtain
Full relish of existence, undeflower'd,
The *life* of life, the *zest* of wordly bliss."

If a man were possessed of the most perfect and exalted genius which a mortal can covet; were he to display in the exercise of his talents all the fire of the most brilliant imagination; could he by the invention of vast systems awe the universe into silence and admiration, or by the formation of his plans support tottering empires or raise up new ones, yet if his principal "end and aim" were not, at the same time, to support the cause of Religion and Virtue, all these endowments would be useless to mankind, the labours of his mind would be entirely lost, and he, in the midst of splendour, would remain in a state of degradation and confusion common to carnal minds. Nothing of a perishable nature can limit the pursuits of a spiritual being. The soul requires immortal objects as, alone, fit for its contemplation, *because* the soul is immortal, and in such employment only can it be said to be exalted to its proper rank and in a capacity to be acquainted with its own essence.

We purpose in this essay, to take a view of the origin of ideas, but without examining whether they be *innate* or *acquired*, and without attempting to *define* them; for it is far from our intention to enter into controversy. It is better to endeavour to raise the mind of man from its present state of degeneracy than to run into metaphysical disputes, from which idle speculations and unmeaning words appear, too often, to be the only result.

Ideas in all men originate in the judgment, the understanding, or the imagination; but in what manner soever they may be regarded, it appears that, each idea is perfected in its own mode, when the mind becomes elevated to its proper dignity. It is then that our ideas cease to be mere *material* objects of speculation that fix and restrain the view, but such as are discovered in the open regions of immensity. Hence it is that Plato, though a pagan, perceived truths which escaped the observation of ordinary men; and hence it is, that in every age there have been men of elevated minds who distinguished themselves from their contemporaries, and, by the aid of rational and profound meditations, soared beyond the scanty limits of the universe. We, at seasons, without doubt, might experience similar happiness, were we to disengage our thoughts, as they did, from the gross matter which surrounds us and darkens our prospect: but alas! we are slaves to the senses, and contemplate only the superficies of things, instead of extending our view to their origin. Our [illegible] that the soul, which was created for God, is seeking light amidst the clouds that darken us, can be to little purpose as long as we continue to slumber upon the lap of earth, and with so much difficulty resolve to think. And of what benefit, it may be asked, can that knowledge be to us whilst the ambition of grasping transient honors only appears to our eyes true dignity of mind?

But were we to enter a little way into the study of ourselves, we should forget these frail tenements of body, and consider ourselves as altogether mind.—Man, who is the image of God, cannot figure to himself that two and two make four, and that the whole is greater than its part, without seeing an invariable and primitive order which acts as a spring to the universal machine, and which he can neither check nor change. The essences of things exposed to our observation (and which are independent of our reflections, of our wills, and even of our own existence) are so many steps by which we are enabled to ascend to the great Ruler of all things.* How glorious for us, thus sublimely, to rise towards uncreated light, and even to penetrate the sanctuary of the eternal, where time, in order to be continually renewed, shall end! Here, with Tertullian we may well exclaim, "know, oh man! thy dignity!"

The soul, which in the generality of men, appears to be extinguished by an abuse of its powers, or from the scantiness of the knowledge they have of it, is, in the wise who profit by it, more active than the most active element—fire. We ought to examine it as it appears in them, and to follow their steps in order to form a just idea of its greatness.—Such I mean as are true models of a dignified soul; such whose works we cannot peruse without admiration and delight because we discover therein the eyes of the spirit and the voice of truth.

Two species of ideas are common to us: those which are circumscribed by the things of this world, and those that are conversant with that world which is altogether spiritual. When that, which possesses the power of thinking, becomes convinced of its own immortality, it cannot return into itself without perceiving a *time* when we shall live in a manner wholly celestial. The gross objects which surround us, vainly endeavour to confine our view to the earth during those *lucid* intervals when the soul is awake and impressed with the knowledge that hereafter spiritual ideas

* The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead. Rom. I. 20.

shall forever be its centre and source.—It behoves us to attend to these impressions, and to adhere to them if we desire to respect our origin, and to consider our latter end: but when I reflect how low the soul is sunk and degraded, I blush for all mankind.

All controversies respecting ideas, in the present day, terminate in litigating and impugning the spirituality of them, and in classing them with the instinct of brutes. The philosophy now in vogue aspires to materialism, and endeavours, of course, to veil the excellency of the spirit and the greatness to which it is called. Is it not strange that within the pale of the Christian profession we should be so lost to the advantages of a religion altogether spiritual, holy, and divine, as to forget what pagans could not fail to acknowledge, enveloped as they were in the dark shades of idolatry; and that we should regard as fabulous, what appeared to them an indubitable truth, and was considered by them as an object of consolation and hope?

But we forbear to offend reason by bringing into view systems which militate against it. We leave it to such as call themselves philosophers, to be amused with their follies, and to establish their glory on the resemblance which they trace between themselves and the *mole* or *owl*. We would rather be engaged in the contemplation of the mind at those seasons when, in converse with itself and superior to all transitory scenes, it seeks enjoyment in itself and becomes exalted to the pure spring of intellect which is found in GOD alone, its principle and life. Since God is the "true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world," and warms the human understanding with his vivifying beams, we cannot, without being blind to our own mercies, turn away our eyes from him. It is this light which *under* exterior appearances was communicated to the minds of the heathens, and by which we are enabled to rise to the knowledge of invisible things. The various creatures which compose the world are so many mirrors which display, by reflection, the divine radiance, and so many echoes which, without cessation, repeat that omnipotent voice of incomprehensible wisdom which spoke them into being.

All men see the same objects, but not with the same eyes. The libertine discovers nothing but the superficies of things which hold him in enchantment; the philosopher recognizes in the productions of an Almighty architect, the greatness of his power; the Christian beholds in them a perspective which is only worthy of his attention as far as it helps him on his journey to heaven. Solomon beheld nothing but vanity UNDER the sun, because his soul was raised in contemplation beyond the stars. When we reach this point of *eminence*, (far beyond the elevation of astronomers, who only count the planetary orbs and trace their laws and motions) we see every pompous Colossus of this world reduced to an atom; and the mountains melted like wax; the riches, the honours, the pleasures of life moulder away, like Dagon in the presence of the ark of the covenant; and we learn that the duration of our lives is no more than a day in the flow of ages, and less than an instant when *compared* with eternity.

I am not ignorant that the soul of man cannot shine of itself, and that the light which breaks forth from THAT which is lodged as a seed within, can be said to be only a transient gleam or glance of the "true light;" yet even in this we may be enabled to distinguish the substance from its shadow, that which is eternal from that which is temporary, and truth from falsehood. To banish every doubt upon this head, we have only to recur to the actions and labours of those valiants in Israel who, being emptied of themselves, and afterwards filled with the spirit of God, appear to have become, even in their walks among men, less citizens of earth than of heaven, and to have commenced their eternity in this life. O how pleasant it is to trace their footsteps in those paths of "shining light," in which established in a sure and saving knowledge, they move on, rejoicing, towards the centre of all good! Their understanding appears to have been transformed by a divine ray, displaying to us the greatness of a soul full of God and swallowed up in extacy by the contemplation of everlasting enjoyments. This is the true prism which shows us those "beauties always old and always new," which caused Augustine so much grief when he found how long the discovery of them to his mind had been retarded.

This train of reflections shall be pursued in a future number.

CARAC.

An Epistolary poem from a gentleman in the country to his friend in the city, during the prevalence of the Yellow Fever in the year 1793.

From rural groves and sylvan shades I send,
Peace, health and pleasure to my distant friend;
Deep in thy mind may spotless virtue rest,
And honour guard the portals of thy breast.
May science shed profuse her glittering rays,
And round thy temples weave her hallowed bays.
May wakeful gnomes attend thy flow'ry road,
And bright Penates watch thy safe abode;
Fair Naiads sooth thy ear, and charm thy eye,
From every limpid rill that bubbles by;
May glittering forms avert the fiery ray,
And guardian Sylphs in circlets round thee play:
Thy temples winnow wave thy tressy hair,
And drive far hence each gale of noxious air.
Oh may fair health, her richest treasures strew,
And bind her garlands round thy glowing brow:
Plant that high boon which languid thousands seek,
Her fragrant roses on thy vermeil cheek;
And with thyself the gay Alonso crown
And shield him safe from all the wrecks of town.
For me, far hence to distant plains I stray,
Dark pensive care companion of my way,
No friend to share the dangers of the road,
Nor ease my bosom of its cumbrous load.
Wring mirths gay sallies from his festive store;
Gild the bright hours with philosophic lore;
On bolder numbers cadent from his tongue,
Rescund what Shakespeare wrote, what Darwin sung!
Till wrathful powers shall solve their angry frown,
Their sated furies summon from the town,
And deep deep in her rock-encinctur'd cell,
Dire Febris bind—my worthy friend, farewell!

CARLOS.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

To the Editors,

Having been amused with an ingenious attempt in the *Evening Fire-side* of last week, the joke of which may have escaped the observation of many, I cannot but wish that others may enjoy it also. With this view, I have to request your readers recurrence to the curious remarks, which introduced a circular letter, lately addressed to several young men in New-York, by a female friend of that city, under the signature of PHILENIA.

Now as it is sometimes unkind, and generally uncivil, to question the purity of any persons motives, I shall do no such thing at present; but shall only *very politely*, suggest, that if that letter were really brought forward, as the introducer of it professes, to correct the evil, which is acknowledged to exist also among the High, New, and Pine-street loungers in *this* city, one would hardly have expected to have seen the letter accompanied by a preface which pronounced it to be written in a style "*unharmonious* and *unconnected;*" that "*the writer had given her remarks an importance, which is fanciful and ideal, and which the subject can neither merit nor support!*" that the practice complained of was "*acrimoniously censured,*" &c.

A person, who wished well to the object of any literary production, and who brought that production forward, with the professed intention of extending the benevolent views of the writer, I should

think, would not have prefaced it with observations, which, in fact, *condemned* it in toto; or have so "acrimoniously censured" it, *as Rosola has done*, in the introductory remarks we have adverted to.

Were it not for the fear of giving ROSOLA offence, I should almost venture to whisper in the ears of your readers, what kind of *feelings* most probably called forth the republication of PHILENIA's letter, with *that* introduction; but being remarkably disposed to live in peace and quietness with all men, I shall at present be mum; as indeed I ever shall be hereafter on this subject.

ALETHECA.

Pine-street, 3d mo. 30th, 1805.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

GRANGE, A RURAL POEM, BY CARLOS.

Remote from walks where noise and revels reign,
And fierce ambition fires the torturd brain;
Where jarring mortals clash in venal strife,
And thorn-clad cares embitter transient life;
Where roseate health reclines her languid head,
And hearses, black-rob'd, bear the thronging dead—
Remote from town with all its clamorous train,
Its veteran vices, wiles and galling pain—
Grange lies luxuriant in fair rural scenes,
Gay plumy groves, bright lawns, and velvet greens:
Proud forests humming to the hollow gale,
And craggy steeps dark frowning o'er the vale:
Alternate shadowy walks and sunny hills,
Soft-warbling choirs and sweetly-gurgling rills:—
With such romantic form has Nature crown'd,
And rob'd in rural pride this hallowed ground.

Hail to thy works of art, delightful spot,
The ivy'd dome, the rich prolific lot:
The gardens wafting wide their sweet perfume,
And soft enchanting with their Eden bloom;
Their sloping glades adorn'd with fairest flowers,
Embroider'd walks, gay clumps and pansied bowers:
With arborets green in scandent garlands twin'd,
Of woodbines fair and clasping jasmines join'd!

There sportive Echo, from her mimic cell,
Responding numbers pours along the dell:
There moss-clad grottos, founts, and cool alcoves,
Invite soft *graces* and the whispering loves.

Pomona there, in rich profusion pours,
Th' autumnal bounties of her rural stores:
And blooming Bacchus flush'd with generous wine,
In mellow clusters clothes th' empurpled vine.

But chief my warm'd, my grateful Muse would hail
Yon *mazy walk* which overlooks the vale,
Which skirts in graceful curves the rural steep,
Where Jasmines twine and sadden'd willows weep:
Where flowers adorn, where shrubs perfume the way,
And nodding poplars check the blaze of day:
With yonder plant, of Lombardy the pride,
Which points its spiry plume, and drinks th' effulgent tide:—
O! would the Muses aid my sylvan song,
This walk should glide in deathless lays along.

Advancing where the *steep* romantic rears
His grove-clad crest, the growth of numerous years:
Deep at his base slow glides the lucid stream,
While from its bosom bounds the golden beam.
Beneath, the finny race in gambols play,
Keen sport in sinuous trains, and dash the limpid spray.

Pleas'd as I pensive chant this sacred ground,
And Echo's shell repeats the lengthen'd sound;
Yon crescent-seat invites my steps aside,
To rest at ease and view the chequer'd tide,
Of such as wing the air or cleave the flood,
Range the wide plain or haunt the vocal wood.

Light pois'd aloft, behold the ring-doves fair,
In frisky rounds flit through the midway air:
Now swift descending, now exultant rise,
Now sweep the glebe, now cleave the topmost skies.

In such lone haunts fair science loves to stray,
To scan the glories of the stellar way;
Revolve in prying thought the kenless deep,
Where Nature's mystic sons in myriads sleep;
In mellow'd mood to court the tuneful nine;
To pour *enwrapt* o'er Darwin's matchless line;
Admire the labours of the bearded sage,
Or *thoughtful* trace the wide historic page;
Through chemic mazes search the trackless way,
And enter Nature's fane with Lavoisier.

Be varied blessings thine! sweet rural Grange!
Peace, health and plenty, round thy borders range—
May *early zephyrs* fan thy wreathy bowers,
Press on thy groves, and kiss thy opening flowers.
May *summer suns* avert their fiercer beam,
And play innocuous on thy glassy stream;
May golden Autumn spread her rich repast,
Nor mar the pleasures with her sick'ning blast;
And *winter* from his ice-roof'd cell repair,
More rural treasures for the opening year.
May each young sun that gilds the morning fair,
And every hour that marks the circling year,
To thy bright dames each rising wish afford,
And crown with bliss thy hospitable lord.

CARLOS.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

Ah! *who* is so exempt from pain
As never, *never* to complain?
Where do we find no tracks of woe?
No breast that throbs? No tears that flow?
—In every town—in every street
MOURNERS afflicted mourners meet;
For PAIN delights his traits to trace,
With burning brand in every face.

M. S.

Were it not a pity to destroy those raptures by which "Monitor" seemst o be transported out of himself and the shades of common life, I should the more readily have noticed his strictures upon the sentiments which *Carac* avowed in a late number of the Evening Fire-side. It is however time for Monitor to know that the bubble of happiness, which he has been labouring to blow up to the skies, must either descend or burst.

The assertion that "the life of man is nothing more than a continual round of vexations and troubles," is gainsaid "*because* it is more likely to produce *impious* murmurings against the dispensations of a kind Providence, than to have any good effect." This, I fear, is the answer of an unredeemed mind.—As the bare denial of our opinion cannot amount to an argument, much less to a refutation, I might safely leave "Monitor" to enjoy his against the testimonies of not only *all* the saints which have appeared in the world, but of all men of experience in it, however depraved. But for the sake of elucidating a point which he seems willing to controvert, let us look a little into the truth of CARAC's assertion.

It is a matter long sealed upon my understanding, that, not only in this life but in a state of future *death*, "there is no peace to the wicked." This sentence is, I think, so clearly denounced by eternal justice, that it would be needless to prove a principle which all men, perhaps, are willing to acknowledge, and which "Monitor" evidently admits; for happiness, according to the tenor of *his* ideas, is confined exclusively to the virtuous,—whose possessions here, though real and solid, are not at all times *glittering*,—which appears to be the scope of CARAC's reasoning. For he is far from denying the existence of that Virtue whose reward is not restricted to this life.

Now, who are the VIRTUOUS? Who, that (according to the deeds done here) shall obtain the "crown which is laid up for the righteous?" Are they not those whom the Apostle exhorts to "rejoice always?"—It is not likely that my friend "Monitor" is such a stranger to his bible as to be ignorant that it is they who "go through *much* tribulation," that are therein said to be the true heirs of salvation. The exhortation "to hold out," surely carries with it an idea of difficulty and trial. The troubles and besetments of this life, the whole host of opposition which the Christian traveller is taught to *expect*, are, literally, the *burthen* of the song of the righteous in every age.—Witness David who, though raised to the post and splendour of royalty, and to a saving knowledge of the ways of GOD, talks of his AFFLICTIONS as his almost constant companions. Witness Job, whose whole history is a fair picture of that contest with its enemies which the soul, in love with Good, has to maintain in its sore pilgrimage. Witness—but why seek abroad for that proof of human FRAILTY which is within the reach of every man's experience? Let "Monitor" himself "whose pretensions to Religion" I will *not* uncharitably call in question, look at home, and perhaps he will find, that amidst his rejoicings he must, in remembering his Religion, *not forget* to maintain the WARFARE,—and that there is abundant room for all his vigilance not to be beguiled by the crafty one.

As, in the opinion of the wise man, there is a time to laugh and a time to cry,

we will not deny "Monitor" the privilege of choosing; but we wish him not to indulge his propensity until he can "*safely* laugh:" for if he laughs too soon his cry will be the more bitter for having laughed at all.

It is not by us denied that there are *seasons* of rejoicings permitted to Zion's Travellers. They are not however permitted in order to detain us and to induce us to take up our abode on the road, but rather "as brooks by the way," to *refresh* the *weary* traveller, and to *encourage* him to proceed—through the remaining difficulties and sufferings which oppose his progress towards the promised land. He must recollect that after he has escaped Og and left the waters of *Marab* far behind, Jordan, the river of judgment, is still before him and must be *waded* through before he can step upon Canaan's shore. From the depths are to be brought up the precious memorials of the redeemed. The true song of praise can be sung *only* on the banks of DELIVERANCE, and *by* such *veterans* as shall have passed through the various trials and temptations of a 40 years' march in the WILDERNESS.

Thus we see it is an easy matter to establish the FACT which "Monitor," in the moment of self-satisfaction, or perhaps spiritual consolation, has been disposed to controvert, obviously unmindful of the returning seasons of poverty and pain, or thorn in the flesh which it is not unlikely he will have to experience. For testimony might be heaped upon testimony, till the least experienced in the work of mental purification should be willing to acknowledge that, as "truly as the sparks fly upwards, man is born to trouble;" and to cry out that all the enjoyment to be derived "from the beauties of nature, from the improvements of art, and from social life," is but vanity and VEXATION of spirit.

JAQUES.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

ORIGINAL POETRY—BY A YOUNG LADY.

When busy crowds retire to rest,
And hush'd the village rural noise;
Ah! let sweet peace illume my breast,
And contemplation yield its joys.

When the mild evening's pensive charm
Succeeds to Sol's declining ray,
May gratitude my bosom warm,
And wisdom's power extend its sway.

Oh! be their blended influence mine,
Whilst I the varied beauties trace
Of Nature's works, where SKILL DIVINE
Unites sweet harmony and grace.

Not all the boasted works of art,
Nor the rich hues of Tyrian dye
Can such refulgent tints impart
As glow in yonder western sky.

The silver Regent of the night,
"With all the stars which round her," shine,
Diffusing rays of soften'd light,
Confess the Architect Divine!

Though silent in their spheres they roll,
Nor voice, nor accent meets the ear,
Yet to the serious, awe-struck soul
Their sacred language will appear.

From nothing, did th' Eternal Mind
Create our bright effulgent fires;
By His Almighty Love design'd
To bless the world, 'till Time expires.

To God, the source of all our peace,
May humble hearts in praises join,
And never may the anthem cease
To Him, Eternal and Divine!

W.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

"No more, but hasten to thy tasks at home;
"There guide the spindle, and direct the loom."
Hector's speech to Andromache.

God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more,
Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
Milton's Paradise Lost.

Such is the language, which from remotest antiquity, has been used by Legislators, Poets and Philosophers, in order to confine the efforts of the female mind, within the narrow limits of household cares. The assumption and exercise, of the privileges, of rational and intelligent beings, have been withheld from women by all the jealousy of legislative authority; and they have been forbidden, with all the solemnity of religious sanction. But lest the temperate force of reason and the daring powers of genius, should overturn these august barriers, the poets also have enlisted in the cause, all the charms of harmonious numbers, and all the witcheries of Fancy. They have consecrated the powers of melody, to the celebration of personal beauty, and frivolous accomphishments; and the bard who should inculcate, on the minds of females, the necessity of acquiring wisdom, or practising benevolence, would hazard the loss of all poetic honours.

Can any thing be expected from so powerful a combination, but unlimited sucess? the natural consequence has followed. Accustomed from our earliest infancy to believe, that the circumstance of sex, has marked out for us a particular path that neither our dress, our sports, nor our employments can with propriety be in any degree similar to those of the other sex; we submit our minds to the yoke of perpetual pupilage, before we have sufficient penetration to discover the formidable train of consequences to which our acquiesence will subject us. The small and imperceptible chains of custom, are now thrown around us; which adapting themselves to our growth become in time too numerous, and too powerful, for the utmost efforts of our improving reason. As we advance towards maturity, the distinction is still more rigorously insisted on, by our fathers, our grandmothers, and our aunts. It insinuates itself into every minute circumstance of our education, till at length we are not suffered to believe, that we ought to possess, one virtue, or accomplishment, in common with the other half of our species.

Yet notwithstanding these apparently insurmountable obstacles, some women have dared to think for themselves.—The mounds which the jealousy and arrogance of man, have thrown around the fields of Science, have in some instances given way to the force of truth, and the energies of mind. What now is to be done but to change their tacticks altogether? The experiment has been made; the powers of the female understanding have been proven. They cannot drive the intruders from the ground thus obtained, by the whole thunder of their batteries. But they may deter others from imitating the great example, by holding up to broad disgrace and ridicule, that ardent zeal and heroic perseverance, which deserve a better recompence.

And hence all their wit, their ingenuity, and their malice, have been employed in sketching out the characters of learned women. A woman who is conscious of possessing, more intellectual power than is requisite in superintending the pantry, and in adjusting the ceremonials of a feast, and who believes she is conforming to the will of the giver, in improving the gift, is by the wits of the other sex denominated a learned lady. She is represented as disgustingly slovenly in her person, indecent in her habits, imperious to her husband, and negligent of her children.

And the odious scare-crow is employed, exactly as the farmer employs, his unsightly bundle of rags and straw, to terrify the simple birds, from picking up the precious grain, which he wishes to monopolize. After all this, what man in his sober senses can be astonished, to find the majority of women as they re-

ally are, frivolous and volatile; incapable of estimating their own dignity, and indifferent to the best interests of society: yet notwithstanding the obvious inconsistency of the thing, a writer in your paper, who calls himself OBADIAH THOUGHTFUL, comes forward with loud complaints against the sex; that they are gay, fashionable, and trifling; that they are not only indifferent to, but absolutely feel contempt for literary pursuits. And so forsooth after exercising your authority, and torturing your invention, to deter us from all useful acquisitions, and this during the lapse of ages, you now like spoiled children, insult your bauble, and cry because it is good for nothing.

Stern says "an insult added to an injury, makes every man of sensibility a party." It is this strong sense of injustice, that impels me to take up the pen. I am one of the despised sex, and I bear in my bosom a heart, swelling with honest indignation, at those absurd prejudices, and unjust distinctions, which have so often repressed the noble fervours of a generous spirit. From my parents I derived neither beauty to attract, nor affluence to command, attention. Of course was doomed to pass my life, in indolent obscurity; to be a mere household implement, which is used and forgotten. How often while exulting in that consciousness of intelligence which claims kindred with the wise and good of all ages! While my heart expanded with the warm glow of benevolence, and with ardent wishes to become great and useful, have I sunk into sickening despondence when I reflected on my sex! How often have I cast a despairing eye on those walls and bulwarks, by which the fields of science, and the paths of literature, have been guarded from female profanation!

Indeed at present, such is our infatuation, that the most zealous advocates for the old system are found among women. And even those females, who have so far resisted these prejudices, as to seek and acquire much useful knowledge, have conformed to them by studiously concealing their intellectual wealth. I have seen some of these blush with real vexation, when called upon to solve some literary difficulty in presence of their ADDLE PATED gallants, and decline the task with as many disclaiming professions, as the most ignorant and puerile *she*, of the whole circle.

Now indeed my friends the balance is inclining in our favour. For notwithstanding the injustice, and inconsistency, of Obadiah's remarks; I am pleased with the opportunity, afforded to those, who have some laudable desire of excellence remaining, some generous ambition, to cultivate the precious talents committed to their care, instead of wasting their golden moments, in frivolous amusements. Let our writers persist in this strain, and the great business of our improvement is accomplished. Our eyes will be opened to perceive that those gentlemen deceive us, who tell us, that to be beautiful, to move with grace, and to dress with elegance, are all we need aspire to. We shall perceive that, even these when the charm of novelty is past, quit with indifference and disgust, the conversation of those, who are not possessed of more substantial accomplishments. Let us then unite in the general cause, the improvement of our understanding. Let us zealously and modestly, cultivate our intellectual powers. And while we endeavour to enrich our minds, with the knowledge and the firmer virtues, which have hitherto been termed masculine; let us not forget to ingraft on them those humble duties, and those gentle affections, which belong to us as women.

SOPHIA.

To the Editors of the Evening Fire-side.

The author of the following stanzas, which I send you for insertion, should she be surprised to see them in print, may be informed that they will not lessen her reputation as a poetess in the opinion of

PHILO.

THE COUNTRY-MAID'S LAMENT.

Adown yon slope the willows waving,
And bright the purple lilac blows,
O'er yonder rock the river raving,
Below with dimpling motion flows.

Here when the summer sun descending,
With splendor streaks the evening sky,
Fancy my wayward steps befriending,
With pleasure lights my pensive eye.

This lovely scene to me most soothing,
By memory's sweetest charm imprest—
For here with rapture still improving,
Oft have I lean'd on William's breast.

Here oft, while Phœbe's light was streaming
In silvery floods, o'er plain and grove,
His face with soft emotions beaming,
He told the artless tale of love.

How thrill'd my heart with hope and pleasure,
How fondly shone my melting eye,
When here I met my bosom treasure,
Our roof the star-bespangled sky.

Now pensive and forlorn I wilder,
Beside this unfrequented grove,
Recall the hours of aspect milder,
And muse upon my absent love.

Alas, not thirst of wealth or pleasure,
His generous manly soul alarms,
But search of health, that dubious treasure,
Detains the wanderer from my arms.

Blow sweetly soft, ye western breezes,
Shed all thy balm, thou summer sky,
Haste far away, ye paler seasons,
Nor dare to cloud my William's eye.

Then, when autumnal suns returning,
With joy and plenty crown the plain,
My soul with love and duty burning,
Shall hail my wanderer home again.

FOR THE EVENING FIRE-SIDE.

ON HAPPINESS.

"Through life be this resolve pursu'd
"Whate'er your lot shall be,
"To act with perfect rectitude,
"And keep a conscience free.
"Hope not your happiness to find
"Abroad, but homeward bend
"And always let your peace of mind
"Upon yourself depend."

Happiness, we understand to be a situation of mind, free from anxiety and concern; for this all mankind are seeking, and perhaps from the construction of the mind, we are induced thereto, and no wonder for it may be compared to a heaven on earth. We may well conclude that Balaam, that great man, saw it so, when he broke forth in this language on seeing Israel safely abiding in their tents. "How goodly are thy tents, O Israel."

But notwithstanding this tendency of the mind towards happiness, the course is often taken which necessarily produces the reverse, for there is but one source from which true happiness is derived; it is the virtuous mind only that can be happy—for the man that does not lead such a life, is ever tormented with a fearful looking for of judgment, and racked with fear and doubts. But the virtuous man enjoys a certain equality and tranquility of mind, that no difficulties which he has to encounter disturbs him, he observes a certain decorum in all his movements; and, by the help of his God squares his life by his actions. And it is strange we should still decry the means whereby we might be happy, and keep continually in pursuit of, and desiring to obtain it, when it is so easy to be come at, seeing that it does not consist in the abundance of this world's goods, but as I have already observed it is the virtuous only that can be happy—and to be so, is in every ones power, but alas! some are so weak as to take laughing for rejoicing, and pleasure for happiness, and thereby misapply the words of the wise man, when he says, there is nothing better than that a man should eat,

drink, and rejoice in his works, and make his soul enjoy the fruits of his labour—but I am persuaded happiness doth not consist in this, because it is founded on wisdom, and if we carefully attend to her voice, she will shew us what happiness is, and where to be found; and that it is not in the city more than in the country, but in the mind, by keeping it centered in quiet humility before God; then let our lots be cast where they may, we shall have a watch over our words and actions, we shall then delight in contemplating on Nature, and on Nature's God: this kind of meditation will bring the mind to that state of perfection in which happiness consists—therefore if happiness is sought for in any thing short of virtue itself, disappointment will await the enquiry, the shadow will still vanish as we pursue: so in the language of the Psalmist I conclude, O Lord, send us down days of thy grace and heavenly wisdom, in this benighted search after happiness.

C. N.

Selected for the Evening Fire-side.

LEDYARD'S CHARACTER OF THE FEMALE SEX.

"I have always remarked that women, in all countries are civil, obliging, tender and humane; that they are ever inclined to be gay and chearful, timorous and modest; and that they do not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. Not haughty, arrogant, nor supercilious, they are full of courtesy, and fond of society; more liable in general to err than man, but generally more virtuous and performing more good actions than he.

"In wandering over the barren plains of inhospitable Denmark, through honest Sweden and frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, unprincipled Russia, and the wide spreading regions of the wandering Tartar, if hungry, or dry, cold or sick, I have ever found the women friendly to me, and uniformly so; and to add to this virtue so worthy the appellation of benevolence, it has been performed in so kind and free a manner that if I was hungry or dry, I ate or drank the coarsest morsel with a double relish. To a woman either civil or savage, I never addressed myself in the language of friendship and decorum without receiving a decent and friendly answer; with man it has been otherwise."

PRAISE OF WOMEN.

Thro' many a land and clime a ranger,
With toilsome steps I have held my way;
A lonely unprotected stranger,
To all the stranger's ills a prey.

While steering thus my course precarious,
My fortune still has been to find
Men's hearts and disposition various,
But gentle women never kind.

Alive to every tender feeling,
To deeds of Mercy always prone,
The wounds of pain and sorrow healing,
With soft compassion's sweetest tone.

No proud delay, no dark suspicion,
Stints the free bounty of the heart:
They turn not from the sad petition,
But cheerful aid at once impart.

Form'd in benevolence of nature,
Obliging, modest, gay and mild;
Woman's the same endearing creature,
In courtly town in savage wild.

When parch'd with thirst, with hunger wasted,
Her friendly hand refreshment gave;
How sweet the coarsest food has tasted!
What cordial in the simple wave!

Her courteous looks, her words caressing,
Shed comfort on the fainting soul——
Woman's the stranger's general blessing,
From sultry India to the pole.

MARY, COUNTESS OF WARWICK.

Mary was the thirteenth of the fifteen children of the great Earl of Cork, founder of the illustrious house of Boyle.—Her mother was second wife to the Earl, and daughter of sir Geoffry Fenton.—Mary married Charles, Earl of Warwick, whom she survived five years. From her liberality to the poor, the Earl her husband was said to have left his estate to charitable uses. The fame of her hospitality and benevolence advanced the rent of the houses in her neighbourhood, where she was the common arbitress of all differences. Her awards, by the judgment and sagacity which they displayed, prevented many lawsuits. The Earl her husband, alluding to her economy and other admirable qualities, was accustomed to declare, that he would have chosen her, upon a mere prudential calculation, with five thousand pounds, in preference to any other woman with twenty thousand. She died April 12, 1678.

ANECDOTE.

Origin of the application of the word Lady to every woman of fashion and fortune.

In ancient times, it was the fashion for the rich to reside, the greatest part of the year, at their mansion in the country, and once a week, or oftener, the mistress distributed bread to her poor neighbours with her own hands, and she was called by them the Loff-day, in Saxon the Bread-giver: these two words were in time corrupted, and the meaning is now as little known, (there is too much reason to apprehend,) as the practice which gave rise to this laudable custom. Speramus meliora, or, in the words of a well known toast in defence of an old custom, "better times." Thus may our fair country women be esteemed no less remarkable for their charity, than they are so eminently distinguished for their beauty.

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

Good sense is so far from deserving the appellation of common sense, by which it is frequently called, that it is perhaps one of the rarest qualities of the human mind. If, indeed, this name is given it in respect to its peculiar suitableness to the purpose of common life, there is great propriety in it. Good sense appears to differ from taste in this, that taste is an instantaneous decision of the mind, a sudden relish of what is beautiful, or disgust at what is defective, in an object, without waiting for the slower confirmation of the judgment. Good sense is, perhaps, that confirmation, which establishes a suddenly conceived idea, or feeling, by the power of comparing and reflecting. They differ also in this, that taste seems to have a more immediate reference to arts, to literature, and to almost every object of the senses; while good sense rises to moral excellence, and exerts its influence on life and manners. Taste is fitted to the perception and enjoyment of whatever is beautiful in art or nature; good sense, to the improvement of the conduct, and the regulation of the heart.

SUMMARY OF INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN.—All the private letters and papers brought by ten mails which have arrived from Hamburgh, agree in stating, that the obstacles which have occurred in the mediation on the part of Prussia, in the dispute between Russia and France, still continue; and that Bonaparte is much concerned at this circumstance. Austria, Prussia, and Russia, is also represented as being far advanced in negociations, of which it is the object to maintain the peace of the continent, and to guarantee it against encroachment upon the part of any other power.

The negociations between Great Britain and Russia were continued, and dispatches of great importance were said to have been lately received at London from Petersburgh.

The British government had instructed its officers to permit the entrance of vessels laden with grain into all the ports of Spain—even if the grain was French property.

An expedition of great magnitude was fitting out at Portsmouth, supposed to be of European destination, and expected to sail immediately, as the officers had received orders to join their respective corps. Other accounts mention this as having been deferred; but several regiments and 1000 cavalry were under orders to embark at Portsmouth for the West Indies.

Two squadrons under Admirals Sir Thomas Graves, and Sir Charles Cotton, each of six sail of the line, had been dispatched in pursuit of the French fleet that had sailed from Rochfort. One of these squadrons had proceeded for the Mediterranean, and the other for the West Indies.

A London paper states, that Bonaparte is is about to cross the Alps a second time. His mamelukes and his body guards had already left Paris. The sole avowed purpose of the journey is the elevation of his brother to the throne of Lombardy, which has been offered by a deputation of the Italian republic. It is however, believed, that his intention is to put himself at the head of his army to attack and break the Austrian cordon of troops already the subject of diplomatic discussion. For some time troops have been filing off from the eastern and south-east parts of France. The Italian troops at Boulogne and along the western coast of France are understood to have returned to Italy. The belief is, that Bonaparte finding a war with Austria inevitable, means, according to his custom, to strike the first blow.—That he intends to drive the Austrians from the Venetian possessions, and annex them to his brothers Joseph's kingdom of Lombardy.

Anticipation goes further, and states, that in this kingdom of Lombardy will be merged, the republics of Liguria and Lucca, the kingdom of Etruria, and even the territories of the church, (the Pope being elsewhere provided for)—Naples, it is said, will be the last part of Italy annexed to the Lombardy kingdom in this gigantic plan.

The late French papers are filled with speculations on the probability of peace. It is asserted, that England has accepted of the mediation of Prussia; that a new Austrian ambassador is to arrive at Paris; that one of the German Princes has presented a plan for a general Pacification; and that the Sultan has cut off his Viziers head, for being friendly disposed towards the English, &c.

But of the authenticity of these reports there is great reason to doubt.

The debates in the British Parliament breathe nothing but preparation and hostility. Ten thousand additional seamen had been voted for the present year; the regular force, and troops in pay, had been augmented to 300,000 men, independent of the volunteers. The loan for the present year it was supposed would exceed 20 millions. The prospect of peace had vanished; and Bonaparte's proposition was thought to be a stock-jobbing manœuvre of Talleyrand.

Holland is represented to be in a state little short of absolute bankruptcy. The taxes have now reached so nearly to the whole amount of all private incomes, that nothing but the new impost upon capital can be relied upon for any emergencies of the state. Several vessels which had arrived laden with British colonial produce had been seized by the French; and some British subjects have been arrested.

We are informed, that, when the ship Hare left Lisboo, the most friendly relations existed between Britain and Portugal.—It was perfectly understood in Lisbon that the British were to send two thousand troops to Madeira for the purpose of securing that valuable island. This circumstance, when considered in connection with the present situation of Portugal, leaves no room to doubt of her determination to adhere to her ancient ally Britain. The idea of removing the Portuguese government to the Brazils, rather than be controuled by France, we are assured, has never for a moment been laid aside. It is indeed surprising that it has not been put in execution. By abandoning their little spot on the European continent, for which they at present purchase peace both of France and Britain, and establishing the government in Brazil, they might in a short time become as respectable as any nation in existence.

Gen. Christophe, it is said, has been appointed commander of the army of St. Domingo, and left Cape Francois, on the 19th of February, to take command of said army, then on its march against the city of St. Domingo.

In a letter from St. Thomas, it is stated, that a few days before it was written, a French and Spanish fleet of 17 sail of the line was seen off Porto Rico, standing to leeward. It was supposed they were bound to St. Domingo.

A letter from St. Thomas states, that a French commissary had there issued a notice, that the crews of any vessels found within two leagues of the brigand ports in St. Domingo, would be put to death. The same letter confirms the account heretofore received, that a fleet of 18 sail of the line had been seen to the northward of Porto Rico.

A hurricane lately occurred off the Spanish coast, by which 17 merchant ships, and a French corvette, were stranded near Cadiz; and an Austrian brig, having on board 300 men, was sunk, when they all perished.

Six ships of the line, and several gunboats, carrying 48 pounders, have been fitted out at Cadiz, to protect the entrance of the harbour against the English.

Letters from Madrid mention the receipt of very unpleasant accounts from Mexico: Some serious troubles had broken out there, and the inhabitants generally are represented as being extremely dissatisfied at the conduct of the present Viceroy. Since the cession of Louisiana to America, the people of Mexico have evinced a strong disposition to a like union with the United States.

The last letters from Semlin, state, that the peace between the Servians and Turks has only been of a short duration. A Turkish Pacha from Bosnia having marched against the Servians, they marched with 8000 men to Drina to repulse him. Since that moment all the friendly relations between the Turks and Christians have ceased.

A private letter from Calcutta mentions that the Mahratta war turns out quite different from what lord Wellesly expected. 1 king's and 5 company's regiments, under the command of General Monson, have been completely cut to pieces; and the grand army under Gen. Lake, had a bloody day; of one regiment of light dragoons, only one officer, and about fifty men survived. They find the native cavalry equal to the British dragoons.

Domestic.—The following resolutions, were reported to the House of Representatives by the committee, to whom were referred the several petitions for and against calling a convention, to alter the constitution of this state:

"*Resolved*, That although the house of "Representatives are impressed with the "opinion that the present constitution is "defective, yet the number of petitioners are "not sufficient to justify, at this time, any "measures being taken by the Legislature "for calling a convention; but they refer "the subject to the good people of Pennsylva-"nia, themselves, to whom of right it be-"longs, to adopt such measures as their "wisdom may direct, to give a fair and full "expression of their opinion to the succeeding "Legislature."

"*Resolved*, That as soon as the people shall "fully intrust and instruct their Representa-"tives in General Assembly to call a conven-"tion, provision shall be made to accomplish "such instructions and directions."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Sam Saunter's communication is received, and is destined to give worth to our next Number. We anticipate the pleasure our readers will enjoy in the perusal of a piece in which exquisite humour is mingled with deep instruction. We would just observe to Sam that his "*understanding*" is not correct respecting the *Editor*.

L. shall appear in our next.

Spring is a delightful season; and, to a master-hand is ever furnishing new themes—but such we cannot reckon the writer of the piece before us: we have therefore literally complied with his request by suffering it to "follow Rambler, No. I." to the pigeon-hole of oblivion.

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